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Publisher & Senior Editor - Joseph Roberts
Managing Editor - Sonya Weir
Advertising Sales -Adam Sealey, Phil Watson
Design & Production - www.perubluesky.ca
Proofing - Anthony Prosk

Contributors:
Robert Alstead, Alan Cassels, Carolyn Herriot, Valerie Kemp, Bruce Mason, Mac McLaughlin, Vesanto Melina, Geoff Olson, Gwen Randall-Young, Adam Sealey, David Suzuki, Cherlynne Sweet, Eckhart Tolle

Sales - Head office 604-733-2215
toll-free 1-800-365-8897

Contact Common Ground:
Phone: **604-733-2215** Fax: 604-733-4415
Advertising: adam@commonground.ca
phil@commonground.ca
Editorial: editor@commonground.ca

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Music rising

With an array of music festivals to suit virtually every musical taste, this summer promises to sizzle. In this month's issue, *Common Ground's* music writer Bruce Mason takes a look at the diversity of music festivals across BC and around the globe. Live music festivals have exploded as music has become more and more digitized, proving that a lot of people prefer their performances up close and personal. Make sure to check out a festival or two this summer and hit the road singing. *Cover design by Kris Kozak*

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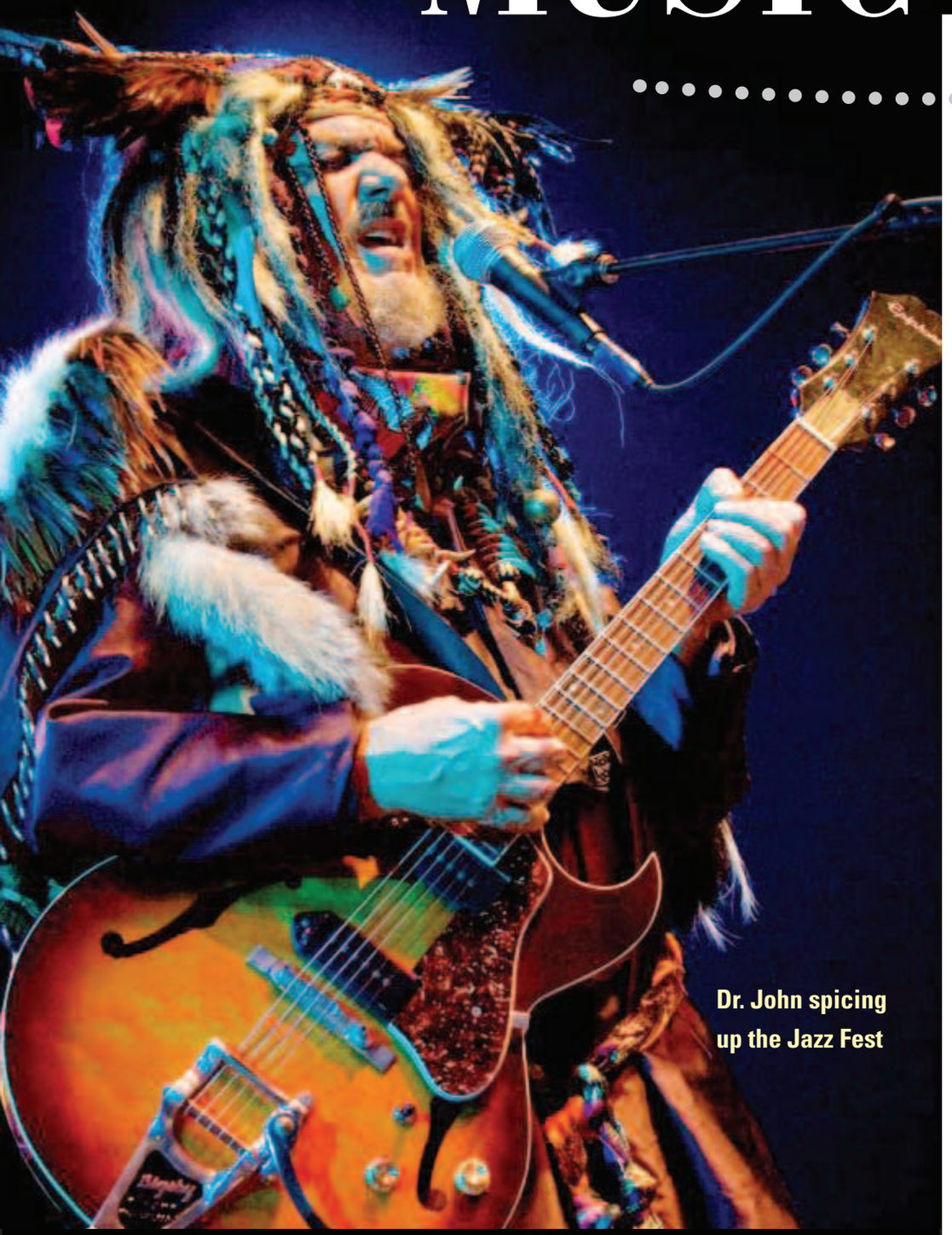
by Bruce Mason

MUSIC RISING



Dr. John spicing up the Jazz Fest

Modern festivals strive to meet the standard set by the massive audience experience of Woodstock

Music fest phenom

from the far-out to the far away

Festival season's in full bloom, booming across borders, despite a faltering, unjust and persistent fear-ridden global economy. A brief escape from that reality is one attraction. There is also a worldwide, renewed love of live music and a search for opportunities that provide easy access to art that's spontaneous, created in the moment. We also crave real interactivity, including 360-degree sonic experiences shared in the flesh, gratifying our basic need for living colour, connection and community, beyond mere virtuality.

It's being touted as a "golden age of festivals" because of the rush in sheer numbers of sites, soaring ticket sales and prices. Events are cropping up on the international festival bandwagon at an unprecedented pace, fuelled in part by technology – along with the desire to temporarily turn it down, if not off. All of it defies the imagination in unparalleled appeal and diversity of genres, confounding our ability to count or account for newfound fascination with events that can't be replicated, deeply rooted in the history and psyche of humanity.

In India, club music festivals combining House, Hip-Hop, Acid, Electronic Dance and other genres are currently competing with timeless classical music, Bhangra and Bollywood. In China, there's another explosion of post-modern, multi-day music events. The Communist Party is plowing cornfields into festival grounds, including a custom-built park in Chengdu that draws more than 150,000 people.

"The government used to see rock fans as something akin to a devastating flood or an invasion of savage beasts," Zhang Fan, organizer of Zhenjiang's Midi Music Festival (the oldest such event in the country) told the *New York Times*. "Now we're all part of the nation's quest for a harmonious society."

Party officials are also looking to make a quick buck, milking the festival cash cow alongside major corporations in an unquenchable frenzy for short-term profit, fighting for space at the multi-teated trend.

The sun currently shines in festival circles, a bright light and welcome warmth in an otherwise bleak music biz winter. Global record sales plummeted more than 40% in the past decade, thanks in large measure to the ease of Internet downloads, piracy and endless replication of digital media.

Over the same period, ticket sales quadrupled in the UK and live-music revenues nearly doubled in the US. There were some 3,000 festivals in Europe last year – 700 in Britain alone (a 73% increase since 2003) – and hundreds more are being staged south of the border, many with a history of five years or less.

In 2004, recorded music garnered twice *continued p.34...*

GMOs fooling the world for 20 years

Myths and outright lies about the alleged benefits of genetically engineered crops (GE crops or GMOs) persist only because the multinationals that profit from them have put so much effort into spreading them around.

They want you to believe that GMOs will feed the world; that they are more productive; that they will eliminate the use of agrichemicals; that they can coexist with other crops and that they are perfectly safe for humans and the environment.

False in every case and in this article we'll show how easy it is to debunk these myths. All it takes is a dispassionate, objective look at 20 years of commercial GE planting and the research that supposedly backs it up. The conclusion is clear: GMOs are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Myth: GE crops will end world hunger.

Fact: GE crops have nothing to do with ending world hunger, no matter how much GE spokespeople like to expound on this topic. Three comments give the lie to their claim: FAO data clearly show that the world produces plenty of food to feed everyone, year after year. Yet hunger is still with us. That's because hunger is not primarily a question of productivity but of access to arable land and resources. Put bluntly, hunger is caused by poverty and exclusion.

March Against Monsanto in Vancouver, May 25. Photo by Adam Sealey.

Today's commercial GE crops weren't designed to fight hunger in the first place. They aren't even mainly for human consumption. Practically the entire area planted to GE crops consists of soybeans, corn, canola and cotton. The first three of these are used almost exclusively to make cattle feed, car fuel and industrial oils for the United States and Europe, while cotton goes into clothing.

More damning, there appears to be an iniquitous cause-and-effect relationship between GE crops and rural hunger. In countries like Brazil and Argentina, gigantic "green deserts" of corn and soybeans invade peasants' land, depriving them – or outright robbing them – of their means of subsistence. The consequence is hunger, abject poverty and agrotoxin poisoning for rural people. The truth is that GE crops are edging out food on millions of hectares of fertile farmland.

In the year GMO seeds were first planted, 800 million people worldwide were hungry. Today, with millions of hectares of GMOs in production, one billion are hungry. When exactly do these crops start "feeding the world"?

Myth: GE crops are more productive.

Fact: Not true. Look at the data from the country with the longest experience of GMOs: the United States. In the most extensive and rigorous study, the Union of Concerned Scientists analyzed 20 years of GE crops and concluded that genetically engineered herbicide-tolerant soybeans and corn are no more productive than conventional plants and methods. Furthermore, 86% of the corn productivity increases obtained in the past 20 years have been due to conventional methods and practices. Other studies have found GE productivity to be lower than conventional.

Crop plants are complex living beings, not Lego blocks. Their productivity is a function of multiple genetic and environmental factors, not some elusive "productivity gene." You can't just flip a genetic switch and turn on high productivity, nor would any responsible genetic engineer make such a claim. Even after all this time, GE methods are quite rudimentary. Proponents of the technology count it a success if they manage to transfer even two or three functional genes into one plant.

The bottom line is that 20 years and untold millions of dollars of research have resulted in a grand total of two marketable traits: herbicide tolerance and Bt pest resistance (see below). Neither has anything to do with productivity.

Myth: GE crops will eliminate agrichemicals.

Fact: It's the reverse: GE crops increase the use of harmful agrichemicals. Industry people try to put this myth over by touting the "Bt gene" from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* bacteria, which produces a toxin lethal to some corn and cotton worms. The plants produce their own pesticide, supposedly obviating the need to spray. But with such large areas planted to Bt monocultures, the worms have quickly developed resistance to Bt; worse, a host of formerly unknown secondary pests now have to be controlled with more chemicals.

The other innovation trumpeted by the "genetically modified corporations" consists of plants that can withstand high doses of herbicides. This allows vast monocultures to be sprayed from the air, year after year on the same site. It's a convenience for industrial farmers that has abetted the spectacular expansion of soybeans in recent years. Thirty-years-ago, there were no soybeans in Argentina; now they take up half the country's arable land. Concurrently, the amount of the herbicide glyphosate sprayed in Argentina has skyrocketed from eight million litres in 1995 to over 200 million litres today – a 20-fold increase, all for use in GE soy production.

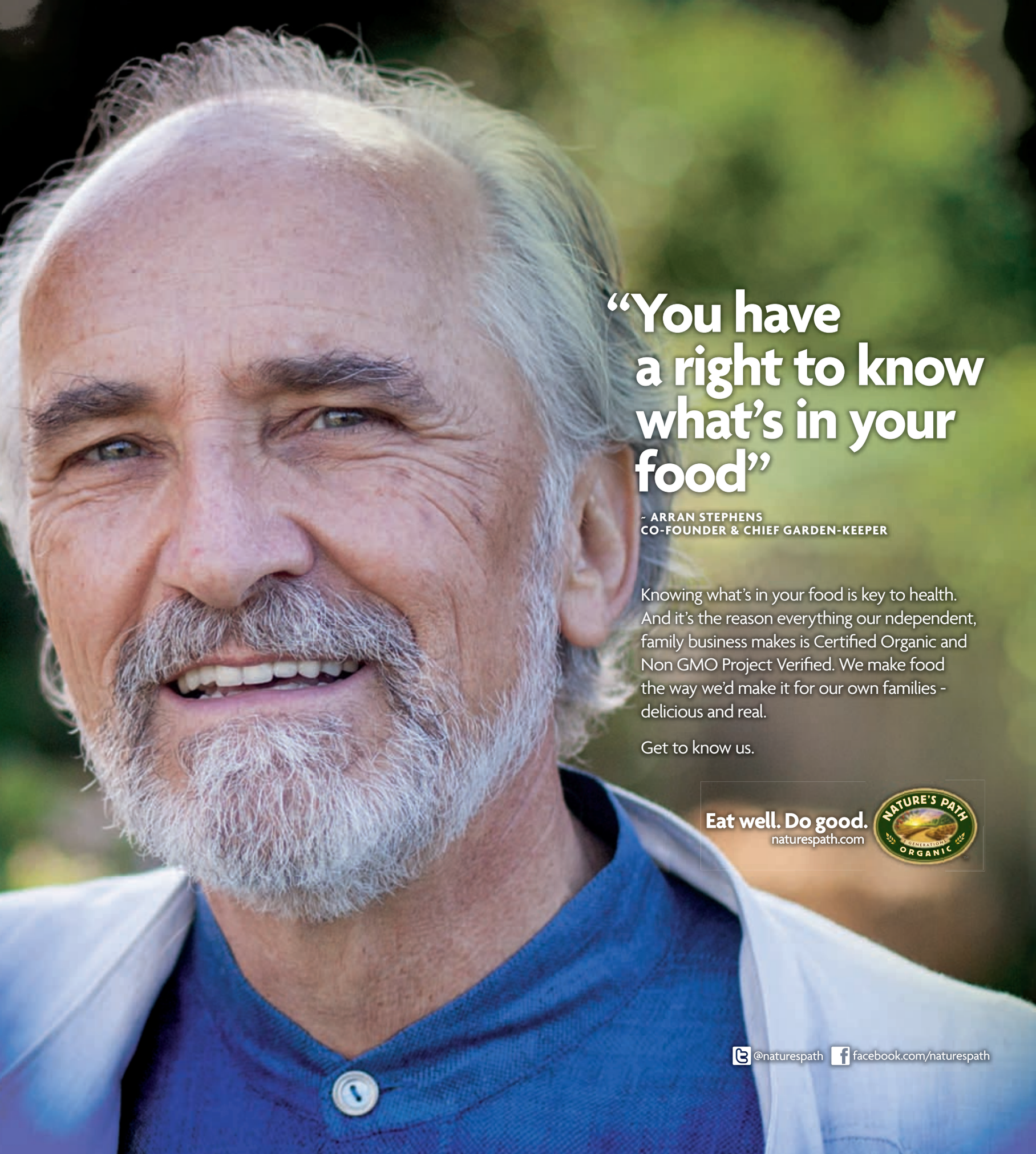
The same thing is happening in the United States. Herbicide-tolerant GMOs have opened the floodgates and glyphosate and other herbicides are pouring through onto farmers' fields. In 2011, US farmers using this type of GMO sprayed 24% more herbicides than their colleagues planting conventional seeds. Why? For reasons any evolutionary biologist could have predicted: the weeds are evolving chemical resistance. In short, the GE "revolution" is an environmental problem, not a solution.

Myth: Farmers can decide for themselves. After all, GMOs can peacefully coexist with other crops.

Fact: It sure doesn't look that way. GE boosters may claim nobody's forcing farmers to use GMOs, but a pesky little fact of basic biology implicates non-GE farmers against their will. It's called cross-pollination: Plants of the same species interbreed and sooner or later the genes artificially inserted in the GE crops cross into the conventional crops. In Canada, the widespread growing of genetically engineered canola has contaminated nearly all the conventional canola and in so doing wiped out organic canola production. Similar contamination has been found in corn crops around the world.

The introduction of GE seed is especially alarming when there is potential for contamination of local varieties. Mexico is the centre of origin and diversification of corn. For years now, Mexican indigenous communities have been noticing odd traits appearing in some of their varieties. Various studies confirm that this is because of contamination by GE corn imported from the United States. Now, the Mexican government is proposing to allow multinationals to plant up to 2.4 million ha of GE corn in the country. If this project goes ahead, it will not only be an attack on the food sovereignty of the Mexican people, it will be a threat to the biodiversity of one of the world's most important staple food crops... What's really perverse about this fake "freedom to farm" argument is that certain transnationals have been forcing farmers to pay for seeds they never planted.

In the United States, Monsanto has taken hundreds of farmers to court for supposedly infringing its intellectual-property rights. Monsanto detectives roam the countryside like debt collectors, looking for "their genes" in farmers' fields. In many cases, the genes got there because the farmers either purchased contaminated seed or had their own crops *continued p.25…*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Briefing Notes on Prescription Drugs

Dubious drug plans

The lesson of Liptruzet

If you receive private benefits through your employment or pension plan, you probably consider yourself pretty lucky and so you should. After all, those benefits are there to help you with the cost of eyeglasses, physiotherapy, dental care and other forms of medicine not covered by provincial health agencies. Of course, the biggest portion of those benefits dollars goes to cover the mainstay of medicine: prescription drugs.

Over the years, I have taken a very close look at what Canadian employees are getting out of their benefit packages and – at least on the prescription drug front – I have only one overarching comment for them: stop getting swindled!

How is that happening, you ask? First of all, the union reps that take on the tough job of negotiating drug benefits for their members are often outgunned and outnumbered at the bargaining table. The employer, the insurer and the pharmaceutical industry seem to work in tandem and their interests are often aligned against those of the employee.

About 60-70% percent of an employee's private benefits plan – administered by groups like Manulife, Great West Life, or here on the west coast, Pacific Blue Cross – is spent on drugs. You would think something so central to an employee's compensation package would be intensely studied so both sides would be well aware of the workings of the drug plan. Sadly, this doesn't seem to be the case.

When my colleagues and I have sat down and looked closely at the products being paid for by an employee's drug plan, we find some serious examples of waste and inefficiency.

Private benefits are important. Employers know they are crucial to keeping employees happy and productive. The union members believe they are a key entitlement, as important as regular health services. When bargaining, both unions and employers work hard to hammer out the best deal they can for their own side. The outcomes of those deals vary a lot and on drug coverage they almost always seem to tilt in favour of the interests of the insurance and pharmaceutical industry, against the employees' best interests.

Why is this? One reason is that the unions are often distressingly bargaining blindfolded. Their reps are often not allowed access to key data on the drug plan spending patterns of their members. Without those data, they cannot develop proposals or agree to concessions in an informed way. Insurers might have incentives to keep drug spending high and collect a percentage of the total amount spent on drugs. Increased use of higher priced drugs could mean more profits for the insurers. Since drug spending data remain almost entirely in the hands of the employer, the deck is automatically stacked against the union.

Why should this matter? When my colleagues and I have sat down and looked closely at the products being paid for by an employee's drug plan, we find some serious examples of waste and inefficiency: drugs being paid for that had generic alternatives; poorly tested, newer drugs known to have serious safety concerns being covered without restrictions; newer treatments being prescribed in place of safe, inexpensive alternatives. I have spoken to union bargainers on this point and they agree with me: it is impossible to bargain for better drug benefits when the one side (the union) doesn't have access to basic facts – including cost and utilization figures – as well as basic knowledge of the comparative safety and effectiveness of the drugs being covered.

A recently approved drug named Liptruzet makes an excellent case-in-point for how badly the unions typically fare when it comes to getting the most from their benefits. Liptruzet is a combination of two different cholesterol-altering drugs: ezetimibe and atorvastatin. As I've pointed out in previous columns, the highest quality, systematic evidence available shows that most people who have high cholesterol won't benefit from swallowing a daily statin such as Lipitor (atorvastatin), Crestor (rosuvastatin) or Zocor (simvastatin). Though some with a previous history of heart disease might see some small benefit. Statins have a range of adverse effects – mostly cognitive difficulties and muscle weakening – that make them intolerable for many users. And they are extremely costly to drug plans and individuals.

Ezetimibe – sold under the trade name Ezetrol or Zetia – works by preventing the absorption of cholesterol in the intestines and it is also currently combined with simvastatin in a drug sold as Vytorin. In terms of the clinical research, there is no evidence that ezetimibe (or Vytorin) has any real benefit beyond lowering LDL cholesterol, which is to say, ezetimibe doesn't do what a physician expects – prevent heart attacks or deaths in patients – plus there is some evidence ezetimibe increases the risk of cancer and narrowing of the arteries.

Many private drug plans, which have been bargained for through the hard work of your union reps, currently cover ezetimibe, no-questions-asked, in stark contrast to many public drug plans that would refuse to cover a treatment with such clearly unproven benefit. In Canada, ezetimibe currently costs employees and employers tens of millions of dollars every year because private plans generally don't base coverage on a drug's overall effectiveness and value-for-money considerations, which drive public plans.

This 'new' combo pill, a mix of atorvastatin (Lipitor) and ezetimibe (Ezetrol), sounds promising and free samples by the truckload will soon be delivered to our doctors so they can regift them to their patients. The big question is does Liptruzet work? The short answer is "No." The drug company Merck acknowledged this in a press release: "No incremental benefit of Liptruzet on cardiovascular morbidity and mortality over and above that demonstrated for atorvastatin has been established." Let me translate: there is no proof the drug combination works any better than Lipitor on its own, which is now cheap and generically available as atorvastatin in Canada.

Seems I'm not the only curmudgeon stupefied that the FDA has approved the drug for sale. Dr. Steven Nissen, head of cardiovascular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, called this new product a "tricky move, but one which doesn't make folks any healthier."

So why should the unions care about this new drug? It's because when the spanking, new Liptruzet arrives on the Canadian market – sold probably for $3 to $5 per pill (price yet to be established) – there is a good chance your private drug plan will automatically cover it, no questions asked. (Such as we saw with Vioxx when it first arrived in Canada.) This new combo drug, likely costing up to five times that of generic atorvastatin, will cost employer-sponsored drug plans millions more across Canada.

There is a very basic opportunity cost here for the unions: paying millions more for drugs that do nothing means less in your pay packet and fewer benefit dollars for other things you might value – maybe better dental care or a gym membership.

There are ways to improve this situation. When unions sit down to negotiate their compensation package, they need to be prepared to ask some hard questions and fully understand what exactly their drug benefit plans are paying for. They need to know if their drug plans are structured to maximize value, encouraging coverage of drug products that are effective, safe and cost efficient. They need assurance their money will not be wasted on every new, ineffective drug that comes along.

The money being wasted on unproven, newer drug treatments is not theoretical. It is your money and as a union member you have a right to ensure it is not being wasted. To do their best work for you, your union reps need to be armed with a good grasp of the plan's data, analyzed in aggregate, anonymous form. They need to understand those data thoroughly so they can negotiate effectively with employers and demand value from the insurers. Reps have a right to those data and they need to be able to seek out advice on how to manage the growing costs associated with the arrival of new drugs. They need to ask, "What is in the best interests of our members and how can we ensure our plan is making drug coverage decisions in our interests?"

Alan Cassels is a pharmaceutical policy researcher at the University of Victoria and has published research on how unions can get better value out of their own private benefits plans.

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A bio-regional food system

For those concerned about the extent to which we rely on imported food and the disruptive influence of climate change on food distribution, it's a relief to discover that a bio-regional food system is being designed for an area designated as southwest BC – five districts surrounding metro Vancouver – by the Sustainable Food Systems Research Group. Co-directed by Drs. Kent Mullinix and Arthur Fallick, this group is a division of the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The target date for implementation is 2030-2050. (http://kwantlen.ca/ish/agri-food.html)

It is imperative this initiative succeeds. BC lost 25% of its farms over the last 10 years yet the food market in southwest BC alone is worth $5.5 billion. How much of this money presently stays in BC? Food costs now outpace inflation due to an energy intensive food system, which contributes 10 to 25% to GHG emissions – up to 50% for the whole agri-food system. (Moreau *et al*. 2011)

I recently spoke with Dr. Mullinix, an agricultural scientist at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), who explained the emphasis on planning will be on small-scale, low-input, human-intensive, environmentally sound, alternate-market and community-focused systems, which will complement and operate in conjunction with the existing agri-food system. "Right now, only eight cents of every dollar goes back to the farmer. We need to decommodify food production so that it becomes sustainable for farmers, with 25-50% of every dollar returning to them," Mullinix stated.

We need to decommodify food production so that it becomes sustainable for farmers

The programme has three phases over three years:

Phase 1– Resource and capacity assessment: To identify desired objectives for the food system in relationship to community, culture, the environment and the economy. To develop an inventory and database of innovative practices, techniques and infrastructure that can contribute to a bio-regional food system.

Phase 2 – Design: To work with community partners to design a preliminary food system for production, provisioning, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management.

Phase 3 – Implementation and plan development: Working with farmers and food sector entrepreneurs, consumers, community, government and First Nations leaders to develop a comprehensive plan to implement the southwest BC bio-regional food system.

Unfortunately, there is not sufficient funding to create a system for the rest of BC, but Mullinix says, "We are currently working on bio-regional food systems projects in southwest BC and in the Yukon. Our past and current work falls under two categories: MESA ('Municipally Enabled Sustainable Agriculture') and Bio-Regional Food Systems projects... Our work has demonstrated significant potential for increased food security, a reduction of farmland loss to urban sprawl, job creation and wealth generation."

It remains to be seen whether our provincial Liberal leader will give thought to the important issue of a bio-regional food system for the entire province of BC. Considering the average age of a farmer today is 59 and the dire situation with regard to succession planning, the sooner this happens the better. Small-scale food production that nurtures the soil and feeds the plants that feed us is imperative if we want to reverse our chronic health crisis.

Carolyn Herriot is author of **The Zero-Mile Diet** and **The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook** (Harbour Publishing). She grows 'Seeds of Victoria' at The Garden Path Centre, www.seedsofvictoria.com

Nutrispeak Vesanto Melina, MS, RD

Beefs about beef

We're into barbecue season and while we may have fond memories of summer events with meat sizzling over the coals, there are good reasons to cook up something else for summer get-togethers.

Recent information from the Harvard-based *Health Professionals Follow-up Study*, which observed 37,698 men for more than a dozen years, and from the *Nurses' Health Study*, which followed 83,644 women for over 18 years, showed clearly that eating red meat significantly increased their risk of death. All of these people were free of cancer and heart disease at the beginning and their diets and health status were checked every four years. As it turned out, the more meat they ate, the greater their risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease, cancer and other diet-related chronic diseases. For each daily three-ounce serving of beef, pork or lamb, their risk of death increased by 13% for unprocessed meat and by 20% if the meats were processed (such as bacon, ham, hot dogs and corned beef).

Here is a brief summary of the factors in meats that can be triggers for cancer, heart disease, hypertension and diabetes:

Cholesterol: We are all aware this fatty component of meat can get stuck in the arteries of the consumer with the end result that blood supply to the heart or brain is blocked. Cholesterol is also in chicken, as it is part of all cell membranes in flesh foods. Our bodies can make all we need; dietary cholesterol is an unnecessary extra. Meat is loaded with saturated fat as well.

Hormones: The Japanese have been curious about their vast increases in the hormone-related cancers (such as prostate, breast, ovarian and endometrial cancers) and whether it could be related to hormones in the beef they import from North America. For a clip about anabolic steroids in beef, lamb and boar and their possible link to cancer, see http://nutritionfacts.org/video/anabolic-steroids-in-meat/ Six hormones are permitted in Canadian beef that are not used in Japanese-raised cattle or in Europe.

Carnitine: We used to think this amino acid might be a valuable component of animal products. Now we find that, within 24 hours of consuming beef, the gut bacteria convert carnitine into a toxic compound known as TMAO that may increase our risk of heart attack, stroke and prostate cancer. Our bodies can use a little carnitine, but we can also make enough to supply all of our needs.

Barbecuing is not the healthiest way to cook, but if you do barbecue, tofu and veggies are better choices than animal products – especially better than red meat. Marinated grilled tofu can be very tasty.

Tofu Marinade Makes about 2 cups

To prepare tofu, tempeh or veggie kabobs for summer barbecues, here is a superb marinade from *Cooking Vegetarian* by Joseph Forest and Vesanto Melina (Wiley Canada, 2011). It may also be used as a sauce for stir-fries, a light salad dressing, warmed and served over brown rice or to baste vegetables while barbecuing them.

- 1/2 cup fresh or canned tomatoes
- 1/2 cup tamari or soy sauce
- 2 tbs. toasted sesame oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup rice or apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbs. minced, peeled gingerroot
- 1/2 tsp. turmeric

Place the tomatoes, water, tamari, vinegar, sesame oil, ginger, garlic and turmeric in a blender and blend for 15 seconds or until smooth. This marinade will keep, refrigerated, for 2-3 weeks.

Contact Vesanto via www.nutrispeak.com or call 604-882-6782. See references for this article online at www.commonground.ca

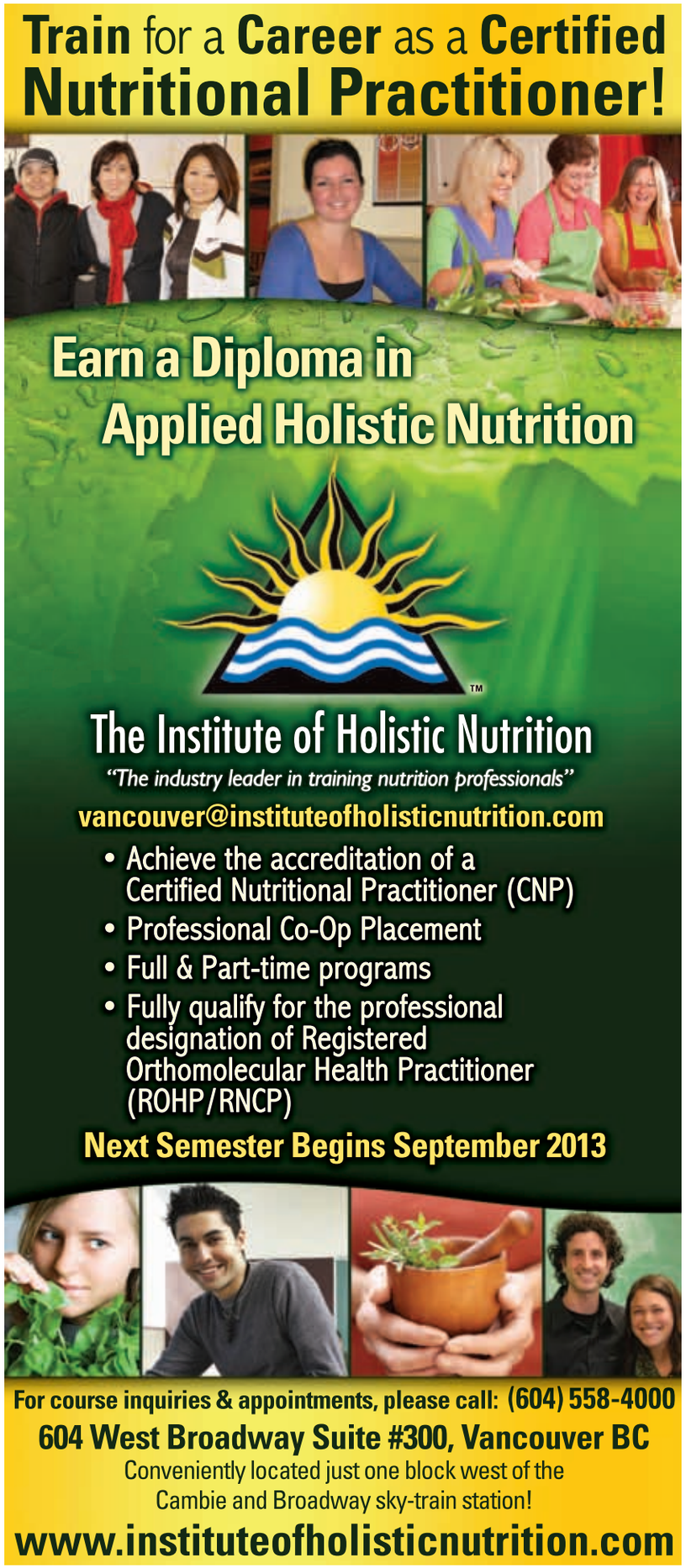
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photo by Anissa Reed

Wild Salmon Warrior NEWS

Five Conditions for tar sands oil and salmon farming in BC

by Adam S. Sealey

On May 15, BC awoke from its media-pundits-pollster-drugged dream of "change for the better" to yet another Liberal majority government. Clark's government touts a "five conditions" stance for moving tar sands oil or bitumen through BC's pristine watersheds and coastal seas. If the BC government were actually trustworthy, I would feel hopeful. But our government has repeatedly shown itself to be anything but trustworthy and so far has not delivered on the most crucial of these five conditions: namely "consultation with First Nations." Geraldine Thomas-Flurer, coordinator of the Yinka-Dene Alliance, and the 160 Nations firmly opposed to Enbrige are still waiting to hear from Clark. First Nations are standing confidently in the way of a terrifying, oily future on the BC Coast. They have been fuelled for millennia by a food and force called wild salmon. First Nations leaders have called for – and demonstrate themselves – "It's time to warrior up!"

On May 10 at an NDP rally near the salmon hatchery in Port Moody, I handed Mr. Dix a change.org petition. It contained 68,602 signatures calling for a ban on industrial open net salmon farm feedlots on the migration routes of Fraser Sockeye Salmon, as per Justice Cohen's recommendations. Justice Bruce Cohen, appointed by the prime minister to look into the causes of collapse of the 2009 Fraser River Sockeye return, stated clearly in his final report, "If risk is greater than "minimal," salmon feedlot should "cease to operate." He added that the Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) is clearly "in a conflict of interest" trying to protect wild salmon while supporting and promoting salmon aquaculture. On May 10, Mr. Dix showed very little interest; after accepting the document, he simply said nothing.

If Clark really cares about our economic and food sustainability, and if she has the power to enforce her five conditions on the movement of Alberta oil through BC, she should establish five conditions for the operation of industrial open-net Atlantic salmon feedlot farms – given that wild salmon is the economic and cultural backbone of the BC coast.

Most people are unaware that, while BC handed over the regulation of the salmon farming industry to Ottawa – and the industry itself – the former government wisely retained the right to terminate sea bottom leases to farms with 60 days notice and no burden of financial compensation to the companies "if it is in the public interest." Well, Christy, it is clearly in the public interest unless you choose to ignore the majority of people in BC, dozens of the best salmon disease scientists and Justice Cohen. As reported last month in *Common Ground's Salmon Confidential* issue, we're seeing the spread of piscine reovirus (PRV) associated with a disease that makes the salmon's heart too weak to pump blood. While government dithers, the European infectious salmon anaemia virus (ISA), in the influenza family and the most deadly salmon virus known, appears to be in BC farm salmon and completely unregulated.

The sheer recklessness of government not to contain these European viruses could collapse a core part of our food sustainability in wild salmon. Meanwhile, Aqua Bounty genetically modified Atlantic salmon are swimming in circles in a closed containment facility in the mountains of Panama. Aqua Bounty is seeking approval in the US and Canada for their sale. Their eggs, sourced from Aqua Bounty's Canadian connection on our Atlantic coast, have been injected with the growth gene of a Pacific Chinook salmon and the "switch-on" gene of a pouter fish which Aqua Bounty claims will double its rate of growth. Unless we protect our wild salmon from collapse due to these diseases, how far are we from having genetically modified salmon in our grocery stores?

Alexandra Morton and the numerous Wild Salmon Warriors of SalmonAreSacred.org, along with support from the Green Party's Andrew Weaver and Elizabeth May and folks in the NDP like Lana Popham propose the following five conditions for the sustainable operation of salmon farms on the BC Coast:

1. Support the BC land-based aquaculture industry in innovative, cutting-edge aquaculture that recycles energy input and offers time-limited wage assistance in hiring marine aqua culturists.

2.Terminate marine salmon feedlot Licenses of Occupation on the Fraser sockeye migration route as per Cohen recommendation #19.

3. Halt the spread of piscine reovirus as per the published sound science, by withdrawing License of Occupations for each infected salmon farm.

4. Don't destroy the US market for all BC salmon; bring the ISAv research teams together, determine the status of ISA virus in BC, then follow international protocol and be the first region in the world to stop this virus from mutating.

5. Evaluate the status of European salmon viruses in the provincial trout and steelhead stocking program and prohibit release of EU virus infected trout into BC lakes.

Esteemed fish biologist Alexandra Morton, along with Ecojustice, has recently launched a lawsuit charging the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Marine Harvest with placing Atlantic salmon infected with piscine reovirus in net pens on the Fraser sockeye migration route. Your financial and moral support is needed to bring this to case to a successful conclusion. Please donate to www.gofundme.com/FishFeedlotsOut for legal costs and the ongoing biology, advocacy and filmmaking work. Also help us get to 100,000 signatures for removal of farms off migration routes by signing at change.org/savewildsalmon and sharing it with everyone you know. Don't buy farm salmon and repeatedly write to your MLA demanding they terminate salmon feedlots on wild salmon migration routes. Join the conversation on Alexandra Morton's Facebook page.

Vancouver has a goal to become "Greenest City in the world" by 2020. How can we be truly "Green" if we allow the sale of farmed salmon by an industry that pollutes the ocean and threatens wild salmon? In our city, people wash viruses from farmed salmon down the drain back into our watershed. If the city can push for a ban on shark fin importation, I want to see a ban on the sale of farmed salmon in Vancouver to protect the salmon and sushi lovers worldwide. Watch the free film at salmonconfidential.ca and decide for yourself.

Adam S. Sealey is a native of the BC Coast. He grew up in places like the Discovery Islands where salmon farms are placed in extremely narrow channels forcing outward migrating salmon smolts to pass close to the pathogen spewing salmon farms.
Email adam@commonground.ca

Watch for the Wil D. Salmon Show coming soon to Shaw Cable 4 on Shaw TV. Follow the amazing and hilarious adventures of Wil D. Salmon and his sidekick Husky Sheppard in "Star Traveller."
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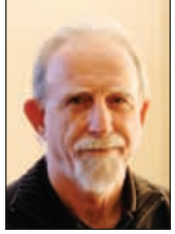

Mac McLaughlin

ZODIAC

StarWise

June 2013

EVERY ONCE in a while it would be nice to catch a break and have a good run. My clients squirm in their seats when I bring up Saturn and his grinding and binding effects. But they begin to relax and become much more hopeful when Jupiter's very favourable influences are discussed. Now, a time of abundance has come for Canada as Jupiter casts his special energies our way over the next 12 months. We have individual karma and collective karma. Our national karma can be read and explained by the position and condition of the planets on the day we became a nation. Jupiter figured strongly in the birth chart of Canada. Jupiter is king of the gods and he represents the higher and broader range of our intellect and understanding. Topics such as law, philosophy, medicine, education and politics are just a few of the subjects that come under his domain. Jupiter and Saturn represent the good cop-bad cop phenomenon, in which the bad cop roughs you up a bit and scares the heck out of you. Then the good cop comes in and soothes you and makes you feel way better.

Saturn represents the letter of the law while Jupiter rules the spirit of the law. Jupiter holds a prominent position in the birth chart of Canada. He was in Pisces, which is his own sign. Jupiter is a benevolent and uplifting energy and Pisces is the most compassionate sign of the zodiac. It means that we as a people will be kind and benevolent in our ways and carry a great dignity among the nations. Our laws are known to be fair, possible way too fair, but it is unmistakable that the silent majority and the overall Canadian identity carries this humane dignity and peaceful demeanour. It cannot be taught and it cannot be bought, but it can be caught in the Canadian spirit of the people that inhabit this most blessed country.

Something big is in the wind. Jupiter rules all sporting events and any type of competition. In the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014, Jupiter will be at its peak influence in our lives. This would be the right time astrologically to rewrite the laws of the land to bring them in line with present-day realities. It is our time to step up to the plate and continue to make our nation the showcase nation that she is. It is time to take pride and give thanks for the privilege and opportunity to exist in this wonderful land we call Canada.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

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ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
The Sun, Mars and Jupiter cast good energy your way throughout the month. The three fiery brothers bring confidence, strength and energy that you can use to your advantage. You may be heading into uncharted waters as the planet Uranus continues to bring surprises and changes that come out of the blue. Enjoy the times.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
It's all about resources or the lack of them; that's what will determine how the month will go. There's quite a list of things that need to be accomplished or acquired in order to make it all work. A time of correcting and adjusting to the realities that are presenting themselves at this time is needed.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
It's your solar high of the year as the Sun continues his journey through your sign. He's accompanied by Mars and Jupiter, his two fiery brothers. The trio may make you feel like one of the three musketeers. Set about to make things right and put up the good fight and your timing is right.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
Your ship is either coming in or heading out with you on board. A very promising time approaches as the Sun enters Cancer on June 20 placing you in your solar high of the year, followed by benevolent Jupiter on June 25. He brings opportunities for growth and expansion over the next 12 months.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
Your solar eleventh house is very active throughout the month. It is time to meet and greet and enjoy the social activities that come up now. You can hold court as you expound on your favourite topics. You may be longing for the good old days and you might return to your roots this year.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
Your solar career sector is hot and you should make good use of it. You may find yourself connected to some very influential people that like your style and manner. It is time to bring people closer and enjoy the camaraderie that true friendships can bring. The heat is on and so is the competition.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
The June planets favour you strongly. Opportunities for travel present themselves. Publishing, education, promotional activities and spiritual matters are just a few of the topics you may be keen on presently. Embrace it all and feed that hungry mind and soul. Career potential is very strong and it is time to reach for the brass ring.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
Saturn is moving through Scorpio and generally he's not too much fun. He is about hard work and responsibility. However, if we're living a balanced life with a healthy diet and good work scene, we don't need or feel his disciplining measures as keenly as those that are out of balance and needing correction.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
It's time to take it easy and let off the gas pedal a bit. Then again Mars and Jupiter, along with the Sun, are casting energy into your sign throughout the month. It is more likely you will have the pedal to the metal as you move through a very demanding time. Go easy.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
You may want to wend your way carefully throughout the month as there is the likelihood of conflict and resistance. And don't promise more than you can deliver because the potential for misreading or not understanding a situation is strong. Truth, honour and valour get you through; you might be the victor or hero.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
Love and marriage, baby and carriage could be the case for many Aquarians as your solar fifth house of past life karma is lit up. The fifth house rules love, attraction and children. For those mortified by the idea of marriage and babies, the stars are offering opportunities to enjoy the things that you love.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
Family, home, land and real estate are the feature topics for Pisces throughout June. Romantic energies may manifest and a promising summer unfolds. Certainly, it is time to enjoy life to its fullest. It might be time for a family reunion or gathering of old friends. Misunderstandings can come up suddenly so go slow.

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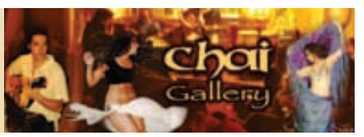

Where it began

Valerie Kemp - Bodyworker, healer, teacher

My career began with a continuous migraine headache as a result of exposure to printmaking fumes in graduate school. Despite the doctor telling me, "There is nothing wrong with you," I was in constant, excruciating pain. I was prescribed medication, which worked for a few years, but as dosages got higher, I could not continue.

The pain was so great I was willing to venture beyond my comfort zone and what I had previously been exposed to. I chose to look beyond traditional allopathic medicine. Thirty-years-ago, I tried massage therapy and chiropractic care, which only brought temporary relief.

My search continued and in 1985 I found myself in a workshop with Barbara Brennan, clairvoyant energy healer and author of Hands of Light and Light Emerging. One of my most influential moments was witnessing Barbara demonstrate a multidimensional energy healing on and off the body. I was mesmerized and deep down I knew this was very significant even though I did not logically understand what was happening. From that moment on, I was passionately curious and knew I wanted to be a healer.

Barbara also channelled for me that my migraine headaches were linked to early childhood experiences. She guided me to explore beyond the physical to the suppressed emotional, mental misconceptions and higher spiritual causes for my headaches.

I began receiving healings from the Barbara Brennan School graduates and teachers and participating in BRETH sessions, a form of rebirthing from Australia at the Pathwork Center in New York. This taught me that a continuous conscious breath can alter consciousness and help one to access body-centred memories and release energy blockages. Here, my perception and sensitivities increased and I gained a deep understanding as to the higher spiritual purpose of my early childhood experiences. The frequency and intensity of headache pain progressively decreased.

Being so grateful to be out of pain, I wanted to give back to others and help them with their pain, discomfort, life's challenges and soul lessons. I had found my purpose!

As "the client" on the table, I learned so much about myself and the creative process of healing that I wanted to understand more and so began my in-depth professional studies. I have been extremely fortunate to attract many amazing teachers – in physical technique as well as beyond the physical – from all over the world.

My professional study took me to Massage Therapy School in New York City to learn anatomy, physiology and pathology; Myofascial Release and Unwinding with John Barnes PT; Craniosacral, Somato Emotional Release, Visceral Manipulation and Lymphatic Drainage Therapy with Dr. John Upledger, Dr. Jean Pierre Barral, Dr. Bruno Chikley, the Upledger Institute and many others.

Going beyond the physical into multidimensional consciousness, including the aura, chakras, intention and core essence levels, I studied with Dr. Robert Jaffe at his Energy Mastery School in Sedona, Arizona and my most recent seven-year advanced study was at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing in Miami, Florida.

Valerie Kemp has maintained an eclectic, soul-centred, integrated bodywork and healing practice in Vancouver BC since 1991. (604-739-9916) See her listing in the Resource Directory.

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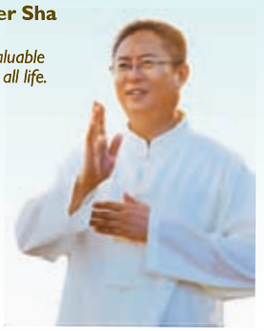

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Banish negative thinking

If you realized how powerful your thoughts are, you would never think a negative thought. – Peace Pilgrim

It is not what is happening in our lives that determines our mood or sense of wellbeing, but rather the way we think about what is happening. The marathon bombing in Boston was horrific, but the people of Boston turned it around; it was more about "Boston strong," solidarity with others and not letting tragic events dim their vision of a bright future. The dancer who lost her foot plans on dancing again with her prosthesis!

Notice they did not focus on the negative or spend a lot of energy complaining about what happened. Now think of your life and the people around you. Few people have had to deal with something so profoundly challenging, but notice the amount of negativity and complaining you hear from others – or even from yourself.

Negative thinking seems normal; after all, we're just stating the obvious, right?

Actually, no. What we are stating is our judgement or criticism of what is happening. Others may see it or choose to view it differently. There is no true external reality, only our interpretation of it.

"But that's really how I feel!" you might protest. Okay, let's say that's true. How does it serve you to keep verbalizing it? Whether it is about an acquaintance, boss, spouse, the government or the weather, verbalizing complaints only brings you down. It is taking the negative thought, stating it aloud and spreading the negative energy.

Positive thoughts are like stepping on the gas…

Negative thoughts are like slamming on the brakes.

This is not to say we should bury our heads in the sand and be oblivious to real problems. Here is the key point: talking about it repeatedly does nothing but make you and your listeners feel bad. Either take some positive action to change the situation or find something positive to talk about.

What if the negative thinking is about yourself? This is actually even more damaging. Positive thoughts are like stepping on the gas and accelerating forward. Negative thoughts are like slamming on the brakes or going in reverse. What we think is what we will create. If you want to do something and then come up with reasons why it will never work, it is like typing a great idea and then pressing delete.

Focusing on the negative is toxic and poisons our inner environment. Dwelling on past hurts, misfortunes or missed opportunities takes us right back there and often causes us to define ourselves in terms of the past. We should be focusing on what is good in our lives and what we want to create.

How we think affects our bodies as well. Negative thoughts, worry and anger cause the body to release stress hormones and suppress our immune system. Positive thoughts have the opposite effect.

When you listen to music, you want it to be something you like. Good music can calm us or make us feel like dancing. If the music is irritating, we cannot turn it off fast enough. Our thoughts are like music playing – either in the forefront of our consciousness or always running in the background.

Life is much more pleasant when we turn off the negative thoughts that are so jarring to our being and allow more upbeat melodies to add to our quality of life. We only have one, you know.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, Deep Powerful Change Hypnosis CDs and new "Creating Healthy Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca See display ad this issue.

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Bean leaves and bedbugs

People living in South Africa almost 80,000 years ago made bedding out of insect-repelling plants.

A couple of recent findings show we have a lot to learn from our forebears – and nature – about bugs. Modern methods of controlling pests have consisted mainly of poisoning them with chemicals. But that's led to problems. Pesticides kill far more than the bugs they target and pollute air, water and soil. As we learned with the widespread use of DDT... chemicals can bioaccumulate, meaning molecules may concentrate hundreds of thousands of times up the food web – eventually reaching people.

As Rachel Carson wrote in her 1962 book *Silent Spring*, using DDT widely without knowing the full consequences was folly. She showed it was polluting water and killing wildlife, especially birds and that it could cause cancer in humans. Her book launched the environmental movement but did little to change our overall strategy for dealing with bugs. Although DDT was banned worldwide for agricultural purposes in 2001, the chemical is still used to control insects that spread disease.

Recent research shows that widespread use of pesticides like DDT may have caused us to ignore or forget benign methods of pest control. Because the chemicals were so effective, infestations were reduced and there was little interest in non-toxic methods. But bugs evolve quickly and can become immune to pesticides. That's true of bedbugs, the now ubiquitous critters that are showing up around the world in homes, hotels, schools, movie theatres – even libraries.

But a method used long ago provides an effective and non-toxic weapon against the pests, according to a US study in the *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*. The authors looked into the once common Eastern European practice of spreading bean leaves around a bed to control bedbugs. What they found was fascinating. "During the night, bed bugs walking on the floor would accumulate on these bean leaves, which were collected and burned the following morning to exterminate the bed bugs. The entrapment of bed bugs by the bean leaves was attributed to the action of microscopic plant hairs (trichomes) on the leaf surfaces that would entangle the legs of the bed bugs," the scientists wrote.

They discovered that after bugs get caught up in the hooked plant hairs, they struggle to escape and in the process vulnerable parts of their feet are pierced by the hooks, permanently trapping them. The research focuses on a way to replicate this. Other research has literally dug up pest control methods that go back millennia. An international team of archaeologists recently found evidence that people living in South Africa almost 80,000 years ago made bedding out of insect-repelling plants.

According to the journal *Science*, the research team found 15 different layers containing bedding made from compacted stems and leaves of sedge and rushes, dating between 77,000 and 38,000 years ago. One layer of leaves was identified as River Wildquince, which contains "chemicals that are insecticidal and would be suitable for repelling mosquitoes." The archaeologists also found evidence that people often burned the bedding after use, possibly to remove pests.

These are just two examples of what we can learn from our ancestors and from nature. Because natural systems tend toward balance, the fascinating field of biomimicry has developed to explore what nature can teach us. It's aimed at finding "sustainable solutions by emulating nature's time-tested patterns and strategies," according to the Biomimicry Guild website.

Written with contributions from Communications Manager Ian Hanington.
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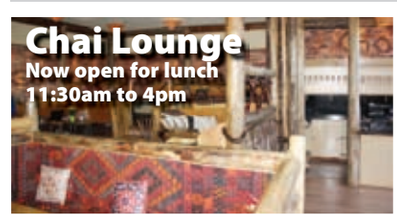

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Poisoning the Golden Mile

Spraying in Oliver, BC, 40 feet from HWY 97

Text and photo by Cherlynne Sweet

Oliver, BC, is called the wine capital of Canada. Many orchards have been replaced by vineyards and from Kelowna to Osoyoos there are now approximately 300 wineries. My partner and I owned a health store in Oliver for 18 years and during that time noticed many changes, one being the increased chemical spraying in the valley. I have sent several articles to the local newspapers, with no response. Of course, I understand their hesitation as this is the economy of the valley. Yet I find it rather deceptive of the "town fathers" to encourage this as a retirement area. Many people in the past have retired here with health problems hoping the fresh air and pure water would make them feel better, only to find out their health deteriorated.

If you talk to the farmers in the Okanagan, they will tell you that, in order to have a sufficient crop, chemical spraying is inevitable and that the economy of the valley is at stake. The politicians spin the same yarn. To that, I say "horse bunkie!" We live in a world of environmental and ethical concerns, including global warming, garbage recycling, outdoor burning and vehicle exhaust so why must we use toxic chemicals on our food?

The truth about chemical spraying in the valley will shock and disgust anyone with a conscience and the fortitude to listen.

Fungicides, pesticides and herbicides are all used regularly in the orchards and the vineyards. How do I know? Well, it isn't rocket science; just drive the Golden Mile anytime on any day of the week. On several occasions, my car has been washed with the chemical overspray. I know they are chemicals as opposed to a non-toxic water solution – indicated by some agencies – because my eyes start to water, my throat gets dry and scratchy and my breathing becomes laboured. And a dead giveaway is that the person driving the tractor, which is pulling the chemical sprayer, is suited up like an astronaut.

Several countries have banned chemical spraying and genetically modified products yet Canada is still forging ahead trying to find stronger and more potent killers. Did you know that soy is the largest GMO crop in Canada? And did you also know that ginseng is one of the heaviest sprayed crops in the world? These two products are supposed to be healthy. Have you looked up into the sky on any given day and noticed a helicopter dropping mosquito killer on us?

Several countries have banned chemical spraying and genetically modified products yet Canada is still forging ahead trying to find stronger and more potent killers.

Since I have lived in Oliver, I have noticed a high rate of miscarriages, infertility and birth abnormalities, not to mention allergies, asthma and cancer. When we owned the health store, we saw the horrendous effects from chemical spraying on numerous individuals. The transients working in the orchards and vineyards would come in with puffy faces, rashes and difficulty with breathing. Their eyes were burning and their throats were dry and scratchy. They described their work environment, noting how the sprays lingered in the air and on the ground, with the residue clinging to the leaves. I began to do my own research and I also worked in a vineyard for a season. My findings were the same.

At first I thought that spraying of chemicals was strictly regulated and enforced by some government agency. It turns out the enforcement and regulations are on the honour system. The label on the chemicals suggests how to use the product with minimal consequences, but puts the responsibility entirely on the user. Spraying programs are extensive: from pre-bud to bud-break to six-inch shoots, to two to three-inch flower clusters, etc. This particular program is for fungicides; there are other programs for pesticides and herbicides. The manufacturers' recommended standards of application may be within the range of "low risk" by a single grower, but what about repeated spraying by hundreds of growers?

The active ingredient in a fungicide is sulphur, which itself is not harmful in small doses, but what about the other 20% of undisclosed chemicals in the formula? The chemical company does not have to divulge the entire formula, as it infringes on their patented rights.

The following quote is from an environmental information sheet provided by the manufacturer on a fungicide used in the vineyards and orchards: "No risk management necessary to protect wild mammals and birds. Sulfur, the active substance, is of low toxicity to mammalian and bird species. The risk to wild animal and birds feeding on treated areas is low due to the limited amount of residues likely to be consumed….

"No risk management necessary to protect aquatic life. When this product is used according to the label instructions, there will not be sufficient contamination of water to present a risk to aquatic life… No risk management necessary for soil and groundwater. Sulfur is moderately persistent in soil and of low mobility. Use of this product according to the label presents low risk to groundwater…"

In school we were taught about the water cycle. Elementary, my dear Watson – water evaporates and forms clouds. When the cloud becomes too heavy or runs into a mountain, it releases and it rains. The rainwater goes into the ground and eventually travels to the rivers and the lakes, which then travel back to the ocean and the cycle starts again. Am I to believe that when it rains, the chemicals, with "low mobility" on the plants and on the ground, are not washed away into the rivers and eventually into our water supplies?

Am I also to believe that the water being sucked up by the plant's root system, along with the chemicals that are "not expected to have adverse effects," is not in every cell of the plant's body and its fruit? Am I to believe that when I drive the Golden Mile and see people suited up like astronauts, on tractors, with chemical spray spewing 20 feet into the air that "there is not sufficient contamination to present a risk to life?" Get real.

Cherlynne Sweet lives in Oliver, BC. Her accomplishments include teaching art, furniture making and photography. She is an artist and an award-winning journalist. She has operated her company Phoenix Design for 20 years.
www.cjsweet.ca

... *GMOs from p.6*

contaminated by a neighbour's field. Whatever the case, it's a lucrative strategy that has brought in millions of extra dollars for the corporation. And it has the added benefit of scaring farmers away from buying anything but Monsanto seeds. Sounds a lot more like the "freedom" to do exactly what the multinationals tell you to.

Genetic engineering: a stalled science

GE crops are in the hands of very few companies. Monsanto most notoriously along with Dupont, Syngenta, BASF, Bayer and Dow dominate GE research and patents, corner 60% of the world seed market and control 76% of the world agrichemical market. Yet all the profitable "science" owned by these companies comes down to two and only two traits: herbicide-tolerance and Bt.

Myth: GE crops pose no threat to health and the environment.

Fact: At the very least, the biosafety of transgenic crops is an open question. Do we really want to entrust our health to an industrial agriculture system in which GE purveyors control food security offices and dictate their own standards? I don't think so. Food sovereignty requires that the people, not the companies, have control over what we eat. Nevertheless, our plates are now filling up with food items from plants with altered DNA and heavy pesticide loads and we are told to simply shut up and eat. Concerns have been heightened by a number of credible reports on GMOs and their attendant herbicides:

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) stated in 2009 that genetically engineered foods "pose a serious health risk." Citing various studies, it concluded, "There is more than a casual association between GE foods and adverse health effects" and that these foods "pose a serious health risk in the areas of toxicology, allergy and immune function, reproductive health, and metabolic, physiologic and genetic health."

The latest studies by Dr. Gilles-Éric Séralini looked at rats fed glyphosate-tolerant GE maize for two years. These rats showed greater and earlier mortality in addition to hormonal effects, mammary tumours in females, and liver and kidney disease... Professor Andrés Carrasco of the CONICET-UBA Molecular Embryology Lab at the University of Buenos Aires medical school (Argentina) has unveiled a study showing that glyphosate herbicides cause malformations in frog and chicken embryos at doses much lower than those used in agriculture. The malformations were of a type similar to those observed in human embryos exposed to these herbicides.

Finally, there is the incontrovertible evidence that glyphosate can have a direct impact on human beings, causing abortions, illnesses and even death in high enough doses, as explained by Sofía Gatica, the Argentine winner of the latest Goldman prize.

Our health is ours to defend and so are our farms and so is the health of the food supply that will nourish the generations to come. Food sovereignty now!

Find out more

New studies keep emerging on the negative impacts of GE foods and crops. See http://re.indiaenvironmentportal.org. in for a list of 300 scientific articles presenting this information.

Published in **Grain** (May 15, 2013) with the title, **GMOs: Fooling…er, "feeding" the world for 20 years**. www.grain.org/e/4720
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This island Earth

by Geoff Olson

image © Enlife

More of a tourist than a traveller, I'm standing on an outcropping of volcanic rock in the Caribbean, scratching away at my archipelago of bug bites. My guide Calvin, a relaxed fellow with dark skin and blue eyes, notices my agitation and stoops to pluck leaves from a nearby plant used as a local medicine for wounds. He shows me how to apply sap from the leaf's stem. Using my other bites as a control group, I wait to see if the itching stops in the applied area. It seems to work.

Barbuda – often confused with or mispronounced as "Bermuda" or "Barbados" – is a small, flat coral island in the Caribbean, only 17 degrees from the equator. It is ruled by neighbouring Antigua, 29 miles south, a nation with a governor general and a constitutional monarchy led by the Queen. Most of the 1,800 inhabitants of Barbuda are descendents of the slave trade.

Barbuda's dusty roads and dilapidated buildings make the island appear to be a ramshackle place, although it's blessed with one of the longest stretches of pristine beach in the Caribbean, at 17 miles in length. Calvin says life on Barbuda is casual and I take his friendly, laid-back demeanour as evidence. He says he not only works as a tour guide but also as the island's minister of roads; I'm not sure if he's joking, but he adds that Barbuda's residents take on multiple jobs to serve their own needs. If there's something you can't do and need done surely there's someone you know who can and will. Barbudans will spend years building their own homes, adding this or that when money comes along. When their concrete, hurricane-hardened homes are finished – on property they own – they have something to pass on to their children, mortgage free.

There are no supermarkets, Calvin's brother Jala tells me, just "supermake-its" where Barbudans trade goods and services among themselves. There is something to be said for subsistence living; this is no debt-driven economy with wageslaves punching the clock to service their credit cards and home mortgages.

Islands are often described variously as hothouses, hotbeds or laboratories of natural selection, with flora and fauna found nowhere else. Wildlife is sped up in geological time on islands, with speciation and extinction playing leapfrog. But it's not just biological evolution that's accelerated. From Ganges Harbour to Reykjavík, new ideas and new ways of life can catch hold on islands in ways that are improbable or impossible elsewhere.

As a 22-year old naturalist aboard the exploratory ship, the Beagle, Charles Darwin spent 19 days on the Galápagos Islands in 1835. His main interest was the geology of the volcanic island, but his curious mind leapt from lava flows to the colourful range of birds across the island chain. Each island had its own unique avian species and this discovery seeded the young naturalist's mind with the initial evidence for the theory of evolution through natural selection.

Darwin would have appreciated the new studies in "island biogeography." In this context, an island "is any area of suitable habitat surrounded by an expanse of unsuitable habitat," according to ecologist Robert MacArthur of Princeton and biologist E. O. Wilson of Harvard University. This includes not just actual islands, but untraditional islands "such as the peaks of mountains, isolated springs in the desert or expanses of grassland surrounded by highways or housing tracts."

The ultimate piece of biogeography is Earth itself. The most worthwhile thing to come out of the American-manned space program wasn't moon rocks; it was the first iconic photograph of planet Earth from thousands of miles away. *Homo sapiens* had its first collective 'aha' moment not looking out to the distant stars, but rather looking back from the perspective of space, on its island home floating in blackness.

Just as islands, in the traditional sense, are evolutionary toyshops, their distant lure has spurred human beings into astounding feats of invention. For thousands of years, trained sailors from Micronesia could literally look at ocean waves and judge the direction of an island from up to 40 miles away by how its unseen presence affected wave motions.

Natural selection is value-neutral however, making "progress" a tricky word. Just as biological evolution has produced monarch butterflies and tapeworms, cultural evolution has resulted in both choral music and napalm. The lure that drew sailors of the Neolithic into the Pacific infected the great naval powers during the Age of Exploration. Four mildly to highly addictive substances – coffee, chocolate, sugar and tobacco – drove sailors, soldiers, slavers, privateers and pirates across the Atlantic like a plague of locusts. Britain, France, Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain carved out trade routes across the waters, using millions of African slaves as both tradable commodity and the raw labour to extract tropical wealth – all the while warring among themselves for global dominance.

The islands of the Caribbean became gears in the terrible machinery of slaving, trade and conquest. "The distortion and dehumanizing of human institutions and human lives caused by crack cocaine today is nothing compared with what the European desire for sugar did in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," wrote Terence McKenna in his 1992 book *Food of the Gods*. A museum in Antigua reveals the mind-numbing record of slavery in the Caribbean, with Africans stacked like cordwood on slaving vessels and traded like livestock in open markets. Abolitionists succeeded in officially banning slavery throughout the Old and New World by the 19th century. But it was the island of Haiti that led the way in 1804, with a slave revolt leading to the world's first black republic.

In the past half-century, the wealthy citizens of industrialized democracies have found a more sophisticated use for the islands of the Caribbean: as places to secretly stash their money. A recent conservative estimate puts the money held in offshore tax havens at an astounding $21 trillion US; approximately the size of the Japanese and US economies combined.

The Financial Secrecy Index rates tax havens according to secretiveness, with the highest class being the Maldives and Nauru. The second highest class includes Bermuda, Vanuatu, Grenada, the Marshall Islands – and surprise, surprise – Antigua and Barbuda. Through these unregulated

accounts an estimated $1 trillion flows as the annual cross-border flow of the proceeds of financial crimes, according to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

Yet cultural evolutionary novelty can go in all kinds of directions. Several years ago, an island in the Northern Atlantic became the focus of a big money scam of more recent vintage: the international fad in deregulated banking and zombie funds. When Iceland got caught up in the madness, local herring fishermen suddenly became newly minted bankers, while homeowners mistook their homes for ATMs rather than ticking time bombs. It all unravelled in 2008, bringing people into the streets banging pots and pans, demanding accountability from their leaders.

There are no supermarkets... just "supermake-its" where Barbudans trade goods and services among themselves. There is something to be said for subsistence living; this is no debt-driven economy with wageslaves punching the clock to service their credit cards and home mortgages.

Relative to the size of its economy, Iceland's banking collapse was the largest experienced by any nation in economic history. But the Icelanders were in no mood to take a post-meltdown economic prescription from the sources that had sickened them in the first place. Icelanders nationalized one bank, put three others into receivership and instituted capital controls. Told they could no longer expect the same standard of education and health care that their parents had taken for granted, Iceland went it alone and managed their own affairs. Most notably, authorities indicted Icelandic banker Sigurdur "Siggi" Einarsson, head of the Kaupthing bank, along with nine senior executives. Bailouts, *nei*. Jail-ins, *ja*.

According to Wikipedia, the Icelandic Financial Crisis is commonly referred to have officially ended August 31, 2011. In other words, in spite of a severe recession, the sky did not fall over Iceland's geothermal springs and brightly painted homes. (In contrast, a handful of nations in the Eurozone have reluctantly swallowed their IMF/ECB/EC austerity medicine after massive street protests, with shattered economies and record unemployment to show for it.)

Meanwhile, just for fun, in 2010 Icelanders elected a comedian as mayor of Reykjavik.

The defeat of the centre-right municipal government of Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir by Jón Gnarr and his Best Party was widely regarded as punishment of "serious" politicians for their role in Iceland's 2008-2011 credit crisis. Other parties were secretly corrupt, said Gnarr, so his party promised to be openly corrupt, although he also promised a drug-free *Althing* (parliament) by 2020. After his victory, Gnarr announced he would refuse to form a coalition government with anyone who had not watched the HBO series *The Wire*.

The Icelandic people take their humour dark. The 2010 eruption of the nation's tongue-twisting volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, momentarily darkened North Atlantic skies and grounded transatlantic flights, inspiring some local wag to note, "It was the last wish of the Icelandic economy that its ashes be spread over Europe." Yet post-meltdown Iceland has done better than other sovereign nations by rejecting the bloodletting procedures of technocratic quacks. The rejection was a novel idea implemented on an island, with all the evolutionary practicality of the specialized beaks on Darwin's finches.

In 2006, I took a floatplane to Salt Spring Island to hear former US Assistant Secretary of Housing Catherine Austin Fitts address the Salt Spring Monetary Fund, a group of residents rethinking how money works in their community. (The island even has an ATM that issues Salt Spring Dollars in exchange for regular currency.)

The brilliant Fitts is an enthusiast for alternative currencies and fostering communal nuclei for new ways of thinking and living. In a newsletter from her online forum for financial advice, solari.com, she writes about one of her partners, an entrepreneur who grew up on a small island. "He once explained why small islands produce a much higher percentage of people who are good at starting and building successful businesses. He said that it was because someone who grows up on a small island sees how everything is connected… He said that America is just a very big island, but most Americans do not know this – nor do they understand that the planet is also just an even bigger island."

There are two classes of privileged people on Island Earth, Fitts notes: those afraid for the health of their chequebook and those afraid for the health of their community, nation or planet. She demonstrates how these two concerns are intimately linked.

"The folks who feel that their biggest problem is their financial equity – falling yields on their investment portfolios – have yet to see that they cannot enjoy capital gains unless their living equity is preserved. That is, our neighbourhoods and children need to be kept safe, and we need to understand that the very things that will contribute to their safety – an increase in real human productivity, honest feedback systems and a restoration of personal accountability – will also lead to huge increases in collective investment capital in the economy.

The folks who feel that their greatest problem is living equity – that they and their children are not safe and our environment is being destroyed, or that we are committing genocide in other parts of the world (or down the block) – have yet to see what the real issue is. We cannot achieve personal safety when yields for both retail and institutional investors are dependent on profits from organized crime, trickery of the investing public and government guarantees that promote unproductive investment and personal behaviour. Only when we achieve real economic growth based upon concrete increases in productivity, accounted for and disclosed on an honest basis, can we be both safe and wealthy."

In other ways, one route out of our collective mess – perhaps the only route – is to start thinking like people with some inkling about their limits both geographically and communally. Islanders.

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AUG 10
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Just now an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of Common Ground. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

JR: In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

ET: Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

JR: And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

ET: Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

JR: At least you're out of denial.

ET: Yes, that's why in the film A Beautiful Mind, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

JR: I remember you saying before you published your last book that the next one would be about why there isn't peace on this planet. Was finding a solution one of the major intentions of A New Earth?

ET: Yes, to see the nature of the major dysfunction. That's why I talk quite a bit about the ego in this book. We need to recognize the nature of the dysfunction. Sometimes, even very great Eastern teachers sometimes neglect that part because they're not really touched by the magnitude of, especially, the Western ego. So it's very important for us to see the dysfunction so that we can recognize it when it arises.

Part of the new book is about recognizing the ego, which I regard as a semi-autonomous energy. It's an energy field. Every thought you think is an energy field. It has a form and then it dissolves and then there is another form. The ego itself is an energy field and it has a collective and individual aspect.

Thousands turned out for the March Against Monsanto, Vancouver May 25, joining others in over 400 cities worldwide.

Photo by Michaela M.
mmichaela91@ymail.com

The best of Hot Docs

Getting her life together: Greta Gerwig in *Frances Ha*. Compliments of Mongrel Media.

Rather than viewing films from in front of the screen, I spent last month mostly behind the camera. I was shooting climate scientist Andrew Weaver's successful bid to become Canada's first Green elected to a provincial legislature for my documentary *Running on Climate*. However, while I haven't been able to preview films coming out, I'm happy to report there's some good stuff lined up for June.

Perhaps most in keeping with the summery mood is Joss Whedon's adaptation of Shakespeare's dark romantic comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* (opens June 21). The director of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and recent blockbuster *The Avengers* shot the modernized version of the drama over 12 days at his Santa Monica mansion with a cast that will be familiar to Whedon fans from his previous projects. While the setting is a contemporary one and the accents are North American, Whedon keeps to the original Elizabethan text while adding many of his own flourishes, including shooting the whole thing in stylish black-and-white.

Black-and-white films appear to be hip now as Noah Baumbach's *Frances Ha* (out 21st) also shows. The NYC-set film borrows stylistically from the French "New Wave" as it follows Greta Gerwig as the gawky, but disarmingly charming, twenty-something struggling to move beyond her youth and get her life together.

A selection of seven Hot Docs documentaries is coming to Vancity Theatre in mid-June. "The Best of Hot Docs" (runs June 21-23) includes *Blackfish*, which looks at the killer whale entertainment industry and, in particular, a BC orca involved in a number of human deaths. *I Am Breathing* is a tender story of a dying father leaving a time capsule for his baby son. *Terms and Conditions May Apply* exposes what it calls "the greatest heist in history" and examines how big tech is exploiting online tools for mega-profits and deep surveillance. In *Anita*, Anita Hill revisits her landmark sexual harassment trial of 20 years ago. *The Life and Crimes of Doris Payne* profiles the notorious and unrepentant jewel thief. *The Continental* is a portrait of New York City's gay hotspot of the seventies – the Continental Baths. And *Finding the Funk* is an exploration of funk music genre. (More details at www.viff.org)

Judging by the trailer and early reviews, Richard Rowley's hard-hitting *Dirty Wars* looks like a thoroughly compelling investigation into the US government's growing use of covert warfare. The documentary begins with war journalist Jeremy Scahill, who, frustrated with the embedded media reports, begins probing a night raid on a family celebrating the birth of a child in a remote corner of Afghanistan in 2010. US officials called the incident, which included two pregnant women among the fatalities, a "Taliban honour killing." However, eyewitnesses claim to have seen US soldiers cutting bullets from the bodies. But why? As Scahill investigates further, he finds himself on the trail of JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command), a shadowy outfit made up of foot soldiers, designated to hunt down, capture or kill individuals considered to be enemies. And that list seems an ever-growing one that reaches from Afghanistan to Yemen and Somalia.

Other films to look out for: Richard Linklater's *Before Midnight*, the third in a trilogy starring Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke (out on the 7th) and *Fill the Void*, a drama about an orthodox, Jewish-arranged marriage set in Tel Aviv (out on 21st).

Robert Alstead is making the documentary **Running on Climate.** (www.runningonclimate.com)

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A tale of three festivals, here and now

by Buce Mason

BC is blessed with numerous fests, including film, theatre, dance, fringe, kids, wine, slow food, fast bikes, wooden boats, dragon boats, stampedes, even chainsaw and Elvis festivals. In stark contrast to the burgeoning and moneyed global festival phenomenon, BC's local festivals not only offer entertainment, but also connection and the opportunity for community building.

Summer celebrations around the province have local flair and varied features; many are grassroots, community based not-for-profits. Some include non-ticketed events, free for the taking, such as the Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration (until June 8) and the very ambitious, must-experience TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival. With a long list of free events and attractions, among many other things, it seeks to recapture the Olympic Spirit and take back downtown.

Vibrant street festivals include Greek Day (June 23), Steveston Salmon Festival (July 1), Khatsalano Music and Art Festival (July 13-14) and the Powell Street Festival (August 3-4.) From Surrey's Canada Day Celebration and Fusion Festival (July 20 -21) to the eagerly anticipated Stanley Park Anniversary (August 24 - 25), there are innumerable invitations and opportunities to share in and enjoy local, regional, city and rural events. And you don't have to break your budget.

Take your pick, but do take in one or two. Come with family and friends and meet new people who like the same stuff as you. Tune in by Googling BC Festivals. Turn on the diversity. Drop out from technology for a few hours by sharing tunes and more. There's beautiful music in live community building.

Vancouver Folk Fest. Natalie Maines -- Dixie Chick Maines didn't shut up or stop singing

Common Ground hopes to whet your appetite and imagination by zeroing in on three choices on this summer's mind-boggling menu. These are non-profit organizations well into a second generation of audiences and all-important volunteers: 1) The 2013 TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival (June 21- July 1, multiple locations). 2) The Vancouver Island Music Festival (July 12 -14, Comox Valley Fairgrounds) and 3) The Vancouver Folk Music Festival (July 19 - 21, Jericho Beach).

Each of these music festivals has strong, year-round community roots. Their websites are updated regularly – hallmarks of modern festivals – with schedules, bios, videos of performers and other essential information for planning to get the biggest bang for your tickets before arriving on-site. We talked with the people responsible for programming, individuals like Gary Cristall who was active in the first Vancouver Folk Fest 35 years ago at Lumberman's Arch in Stanley Park. Gary is a long-time artistic director, currently working on the definitive book about Canadian folk music in the 20th century.

"I've written 400 pages, up to the '50s and a few years away from the finish," Cristall reports. "There have been a great many changes, including the very notion of what folk music is, now more diverse and inclusive yet still evolving. Mariposa was and is the model, with multiple stages and one main point of entrance. We used to pay all artists the same amount. There were no stars; everyone was treated the same. It was less of an industry and it was easier because there were fewer festivals and less competition for talent," Cristall notes.

He recalls advice from the late great Utah Phillips who offered two tips: first, never forget you are putting bread and butter on artists' tables and treat them with respect. Secondly, give the audience what you think they need, not just what they want. "To program a major festival, you have to be an amateur musicologist, build a big record collection and believe you have the best taste in the world," Cristall says. "I always looked for

At VIMF: Mary Chapin Carpenter – *Ashes and Roses, No Going Back* (latest release and Emmy film)

something that knocked me out and remember moments when a solo artist with a single acoustic instrument held tens of thousands of people spellbound, often beyond expectations. And I was constantly surprised – especially at workshops – by people who had never played together before and would never again be in the same musical configuration."

Local jazz has benefitted from the creative direction and vision of artistic director Ken Pickering. He has consistently curated impressive, innovative programs celebrating the evolution of the art form in all its manifestations, developing and maintaining a globally recognized reputation for the city's festival.

Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars – a phoenix of hope, faith and joy at VFF

John Orysik was also there at the beginning when the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society formed as a charitable arts organization in 1986. It has become BC's largest music presenter, not only producing one of the world's most critically acclaimed jazz festivals – which draws more than a half million patrons annually – but also producing a profound impact on the regional culture and the community at large. "We want to continue to help develop an appreciation for artistic excellence and highly skilled improvization. It's at the very heart of jazz. We seek out the real dream-makers to present a summit meeting of great artists to connect with audiences. They add new perspectives across the broad spectrum of influences, including traditional and contemporary jazz, Latin, blues, rock and world music," Orysik says.

The festival features more than 300 concerts (150 free) and 1,800 musicians in 35 venues across Vancouver's Lower Mainland and North Shore including the Downtown Jazz Opening Weekend and the David Lam Park Jazz Closing Weekend. The society also produces the annual Music Series for the Winterruption Festival on Granville Island, the Time Flies Improvised Music Festival and year-round concerts and education programs.

It also generates $35 million into the local economy over an 11-day period.

Vancouver Island's Comox Valley has also benefitted from the artistic direction of Doug Cox who, 13-years-ago, brought a wealth of experience as a producer of volunteer-run events as well as the perspective of a professional musician who spends eight months of the year touring the world.

"We've always insisted on the best players and treat them very well, offering exposure to 10,000 people," Cox says. "Proximity to an airport and the passion and pride of 1,200 volunteers – some second generation and from as far away as Campbell River and Victoria – are among the reasons why the Vancouver Island Music Fest is in the bucket-list of places to play for many major artists."

Cox cites studies showing that every dollar spent on festival tickets spins off four more into local economies and that sales of CDs at festivals have surpassed retail outlets. VIMF camping is sold out and every hotel, motel and B&B will follow suit. This year, for the first time, a regional economic impact study is being conducted.

Like all the others interviewed for this article, Cox, who is resisting requests for large screens, stresses that community building is an important festival goal. "Live music is powerful and it's critically important to the mental health and wellbeing of a community. It's wonderful to see the lights go on in the minds of people in the audience, to witness real growth in tolerance and new-found exposure to and acceptance of diversity," Doug reports.

"We count highly educated, sophisticated lawyers, doctors and teachers in our festival's prime audience of baby-boomers. Increasingly, we see more youth who have grown up with us. And it can literally bring tears to the eyes of anyone standing on the stage and looking out on the dynamic mix of hippies, bikers, bankers, fishermen and young families," he adds.

Almost 1,500 folks build an instant community every year on Jericho Beach where 65 acts will perform on eight stages. Vancouver Folk Fest publicist Gwen Kallio describes the artistic director's job, atop the complex organization: "Imagine juggling a half dozen Rubik's cubes on a tight deadline, overseeing everything from booking, transporting and housing musicians to security and the myriad concerns and headaches required by a population of 40,000. All that is compressed into a relative snap of the fingers for three days and then just as suddenly, tens of thousands of people vanish – until next year – leaving behind the huge task of tearing-down, packing and cleaning up."

Indigo Girls: "our hearts out-rule our heads" at VIMF

Linda Tanaka, who has this ultimate responsibility for 2013, admits that competition for well-know headliners such as Steve Earl and Dixie Chick Natalie Maines is tight. But playing Vancouver is a feather in any artist's cap. As well, there is a rich world of emerging excellence awaiting your discovery, sources for festival-goers' hopes for additional, unanticipated inspiration.

"There is a renewal of spirit, a coming together of diverse acts and audiences to connect and interact," says Tanaka. "For me, the sharing of stories is very important, something I look for. And this year, lots will be told and performed to the audience, including Sierra Leonean refugees, first timers from China, Italy, and little-known experiences across Canada and even closer to home."

There are ample headliners to attract your attention

From the Jazz world: legendary pianist Herbie Hancock, Dr. John and the Nite Trippers, Nikki Yanofsky, and the David Murray Infinity Quintet, featuring Macy Gray.

Comox will host the likes of Kris Kristofferson, Mary Chapin Carpenter, John Hiatt, the Wailin' Jennys and Indigo Girls, among others.

On Vancouver's **Jericho Beach**: Earl and the Dukes, Maines, Hannah Georgas, the Waterboys, Woody's granddaughter Sarah Lee Guthrie and many more.

Don't forget household names are just the tip of the unforgettable experiences and warm welcome awaiting at the amazing array of festivals around the province this summer. Expect to be surprised.

Next month, *Common Ground* will explore August's unique offerings, including Shambhala in Salmo, Wanderlust in Whistler and Burnaby's wonderful one-day Blues and Roots Fest with Blue Rodeo and others congregating around Deer Lake.

... ***Music fest phenom*** *from p.5*

as much as concerts. By 2008, more money was spent on live music for the first time in modern history. That gap is growing rapidly as the festival business morphs into a multi-billion dollar global growth industry.

"Woodstock Nation" sets the stage

The earliest music festival was documented way back in 582 B.C. when the first Pythian Games swept through Ancient Greece. Fast forward 2,000 plus years to Bethel, New York, in August, 1969, when more than a half-million people flocked to a Max Yasgur's 600-acre dairy farm where 32 acts played the three-day Woodstock Music & Art Fair.

Iconic and pivotal, the ultimate gathering, emblematic of the counterculture, defined a generation and redefined youth culture. It also celebrated a revolution in which free sex, drugs and rock and roll transcended recreational use into arenas of political statement and rebellion against war, conformity and cultural oppression.

Co-producer Joel Rosenman, aptly described it as "a big community listening to the best bands in the most beautiful setting." And thus Woodstock set the standard to which modern festivals strive and the experience that massive audiences seek.

Forward even faster over mere decades to mega-giants such as Coachella, Lollapalooza, Bonnaroo and Austin City Limits. Deliberately designed and curated to take the legacy to a whole new level, they expanded the rock repertoire into a mass festival scene and culture. These multi-million dollar, multi-genre extravaganzas feature more and more creative lighting and sound, large sculptures and structures, hundreds of eclectic acts on multiple stages and acres of booths and non-musical entertainment. There's something for everyone, big-time. Myriad attractions draw staggering ticket sales. Each of the big four has survived a decade or more and all are thriving, skyrocketing in popularity, the wow factor exploding exponentially.

Rolling Stone described Bonnaroo – on 700 acres of Tennessee farmland – as "the ultimate over-the-top festival." Lollapalooza was reborn in Chicago. Coachella, one of the most high profile and talked-about events in California – including Tupac Shakur rising from the dead as a hologram, live-streamed from the California desert – has sold out for three years running, most recently topping $45 million over two weekends. Festival-going youth enjoying Coldplay, Radiohead and other summer headliners describe it as transformative. "Changed my life," they say, echoing coming-of-age rituals of previous generations, listing live music events as unforgettable experiences, shared with thousands of strangers and assorted like-minded new "friends," in the flesh, a dimension far beyond Facebook.

Commerce is the driving force, referred to as "experiential marketing" and "festival branding" in corporation-speak. The uptick is occurring as single-artists struggle to fill seats. Festival attendance climbed 27% from 2010 to 2012 while concerts dropped 12%. Admission to the average concert is $47, compared to $225 for festivals. A concert lasts a few hours and features one or two artists. Festivals carry on for days with hundreds of acts, a major consideration for cash-strapped fans. Obviously, audiences are willing to pay for one-off events and experiences, making bulk entertainment purchases that include opportunities to discover new bands outside, up close and more personal than through computer screens, radio and in stadiums.

Festival tickets are being sold further and further in advance, before artists' names are released. Three-day passes ($200) for Austin City Limits sold out within an hour of the full lineup announcement and no tickets were left for Washington State's Sasquatch! music festival a week before fans knew who was performing in The Gorge on the Columbia River.

Add the rapid rise of electronic music to the mix. Rave culture had long been prominent in Europe as DJ's became international superstars and pent-up demand in North America in the past decade developed into an entirely new demographic of festival-goers. Miami's Ultra Music – the largest and most popular Electronic Dance Music (EDM) – for example, reached a record 165,000 attendees in 2012.

Turn on the diversity. Drop out from technology for a few hours by sharing tunes and more. There's beautiful music in live community building.

Until recently, live performance tours were marketing vehicles to plug new recordings. Now there's a flip-side. In media conglomerates like Sony and Warner, on down the chain, music is being rethought, dollar signs flashing in the festival furor that's become essential to gaining, maintaining and growing a fan following.

The festival feast – more tempting menus and takeaway

Among those most often found on ubiquitous 'Best' and 'Biggest' lists: Electric Daisy Carnival (Las Vegas), Burning Man in Nevada, South by Southwest in Texas, Electric Zoo in New York, Outside Lands in San Francisco, Seattle's Bumbershoot and Milwaukee's Summerfest.

Artist incomes are being boosted royally, especially independents that gig for a living. And by pooling audiences, fan bases are broadening extensively. The increase in website live streaming has mass-marketers drooling, adding untold, untapped millions to the exponential growth in audiences of those who don't want to miss out, opting for the next best thing without leaving home.

But the sheer size and scope is prompting some artists to stay away or choose different routes. Among them, miniature touring versions produced by headlining acts such as Dave Matthews Band and Rage Against the Machine. And more artists are creating their own festivals, Metallica, Wilco and Grace Potter and the Nocturnals among them. It was Longfellow who coined the phrase, "Music is the universal language of mankind." The most popular poet of his age, he had an ear for mass taste, earning as much as a whopping $3,000 per poem in 1874. But it is doubtful that even old Henry Wadsworth himself could have fully envisioned the reach and grasp of globalization or the appeal of world music and relatively cheap, commonplace international travel.

Lists of recommended festivals now routinely include the far away, along with the far out. Glastonbury in Somerset, England, the world's largest greenfield festival is considered the ultimate by many. It's also famed for heavy downpours and mud. But tickets for 2013 sold out in less than two hours.

It is difficult to keep track. Among others there is a 'Festival Junkies' website pushing Reading and London's Barclaycard Wireless Festival, Scotland's TITP, Festival *Internacional de Benicàssim* in *Castellón de la Plana*, Spain, the EXIT Festival on the River Danube in the Petrovaradin Forest, Novi Sad, Serbia – yes, Serbia – Denmark's Roskilde, Germany's Rock am Ring and Rock im Park and Australia's Big Day Out.

Topping an attendance of 180,000, Belgium's Tomorrowland is a leader of the pack in another new festival trend: organizers have plans to expand to myriad locations and horizons, exploring new markets in Eastern Europe and North and South America and beyond. The surface is just being scratched. There are other genres to mine, including older veins such as blues and country. Colorado's Telluride Bluegrass Festival is one of many in a form of acoustic music that survived and now thrives because of festivals.

The *Festival International de Jazz de Montréal*, now the largest of its kind, features some 3,000 artists from more than 25 countries – an inspiration, something to improvise upon.

Folks who hate music festivals will go to great lengths to avoid them. But rapidly growing numbers of festival-goers dream in technicolour of travelling to the ends of the Earth for live music. The actual performances are now a fraction of the total package and party, providing background for camaraderie, kinship and unspoken bonds, bordering on the tribal.

Some go only for the off-stage adventure, drugs and the ultimate in people watching. More than music is being shared, including the journey, the weather, the build-up, the artist line-up and on-site line-ups, the scramble for tickets and sight lines to stages. Leaving problems, stress and boredom back home – temporarily out of sight and mind – in the new phenomena, fans drift aimlessly and "disappear" inside the festival "world," temporary communities pulsing and marching to the same beat.

Not all festivals succeed, but more and more will undoubtedly crop up. It's highly likely that a new one is coming soon to a field near you, adding to those already there, a short drive, bus or bike ride away. And someone you know is undoubtedly contemplating an escape with a music festival front and centre.

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of **Our Clinic**. brucemason@shaw.ca

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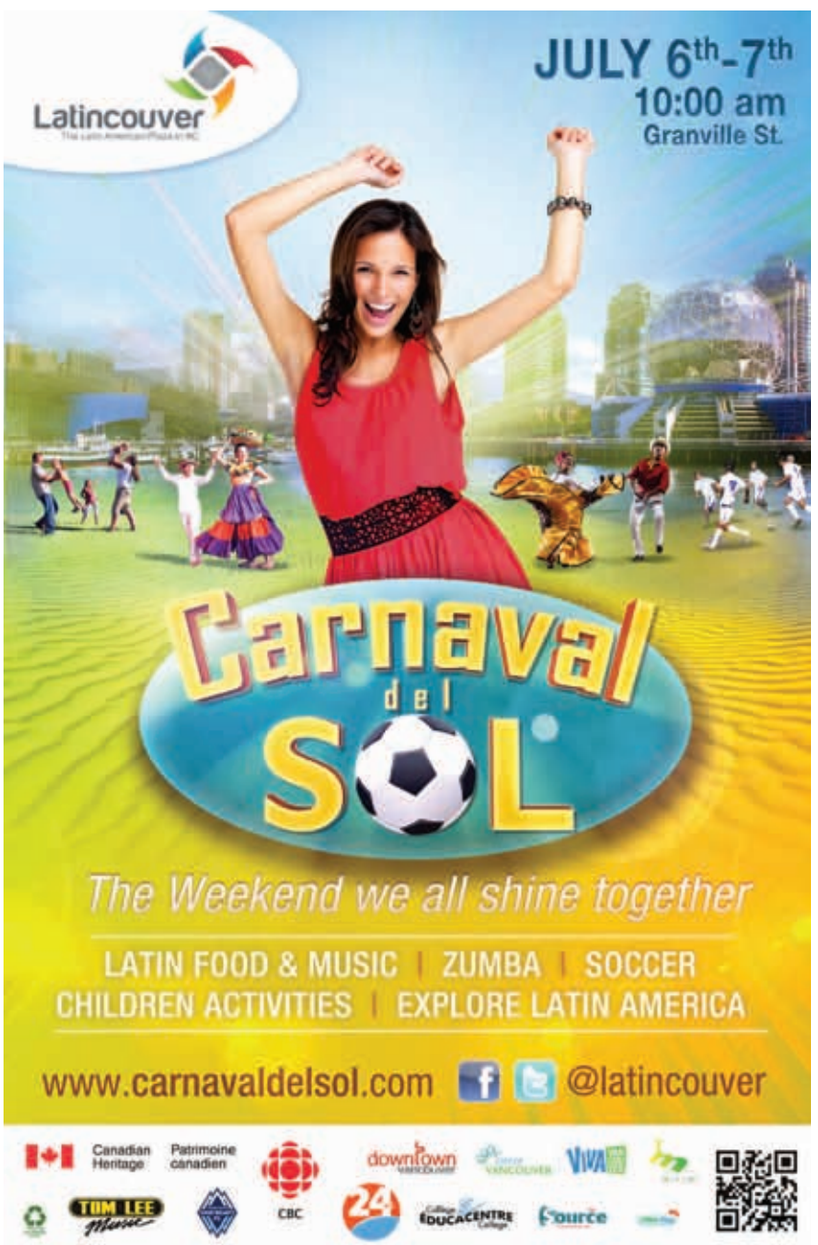
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